

# Communicating Vocation

Spirituality Down to Earth

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Ecumenical Anthology IIX of  
the WSCF Central European Subregion

Edited by  
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BGÖI & WSCF-CESR

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# Contents

**8** NAGYPÁL Szabolcs – Rebecca BLOCKSOME

*Staying on the Paved Path*

## I. Eternal Values: Hunting for Vocation

**14** Aaron C. STEVENS

*Storylinking in the Global Church:*

*African American Wisdom as a Guide for*

*Discernment in the Central European Context*

**27** Libor MAREK

*Marriage as Vocation and its Value*

*(Based on 1Cor 7,32–35)*

**37** Pavel HANES

*The Response of the New Testament Church*

*to Material Needs and Materialism*

**50** Nerija PUTINAITĖ

*Paradox of Christianity*

*in Contemporary Democracy:*

*Presence and Vocation*

**62** Jamie MORAN

*God is a Gambler*

**76** Peter ŠAJDA

*The Very Same Eye:*

*A Baptismal Meditation*

**79** Daniel PASTIRČÁK

*The Eternity Tale*

## II. Unlimited Dialogue: Passion Communicated

- 85** Sören ASMUS  
*Dialogue as Unlimited Interpretation*
- 93** John George HUBER  
*A Lutheran – Roman Catholic Initiative  
in the United States Dialogues*
- 113** NAGYPÁL Szabolcs  
*Speaking the Truth in Love:  
An Ecumenical Framework  
for Interreligious Dialogue*
- 127** SÁRKÁNY Péter  
*An Outline of the Philosophical Care of the Soul:  
Phenomenology,  
Existential-Analytic Logotherapy  
and Philosophical Counselling*
- 135** Patricia BLOCKSOME  
*The Birth, Death and Resurrection of Theatre:  
Religion's Cyclical Relationship with the Stage*
- 147** Jamie MORAN  
*Cleave: The Hebrew Word for Passion*
- 159** Rebecca BLOCKSOME  
*Ut Pictura Poesis:  
Word and Image  
in Early Modernism*

## III. Central Europe: A Responsible Identity

- 173** Holger LAHAYNE  
*Religion, Democratic Society  
and the Individual in Lithuania*
- 186** NAGYPÁL Szabolcs  
*Proselytism and Religious Freedom:  
The Case of Russia, Ukraine and Poland*
- 203** Holger LAHAYNE  
*Law and Responsibility  
from a Reformed Perspective*
- 214** Rebecca BLOCKSOME  
*Time and Territoriality:  
Delineating Place and Self  
in Winter Stores*
- 229** Andrea JÁGEROVÁ  
*By-names and other Mockeries  
of Slovak Towns and Villages*
- 235** Daniel PASTIRČÁK  
*A Fairytale about  
a Jester and a King*

# Staying on the Paved Path

## I. Seminars and Topics

The Central European Subregion of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF-CESR, <http://www.wscf-cesr.org>) was created in 2001 and is composed of Student Christian Movements (SCMs) from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Since 2002, our annual programme has consisted of two seminars concerning contemporary issues in Central Europe and the publication of an ecumenical anthology, which brings together and further develops the topics addressed at these seminars. This year's seminars took place in *Kremsmünster*, Austria, and *Balatonföldvár*, Hungary.

The topic of our fifteenth seminar was *Stay in Touch: Media Innovations and Influences*. Its themes involved the effects of contemporary media on notions of the individual, community, nation and the Church; challenges of modern communication; mass media in connection with individual, spiritual, cultural and religious development; historical and current influences of the media in Central Europe; questions of hermeneutics, interpretation and manipulation; contemporary communication as a tool for cooperation and social change; globalisation; and the availability of information versus information overload.

In a wider sense, *ecumenical and interreligious dialogue* are part of the problematics of communication – for example, different aspects of and approaches to ecumenical (interchurch) and interreligious

dialogue; ecumenical and interfaith endeavours in history; different case studies; the role of churches, traditions and religions in the process of reconciliation; visionary insights on the visible unity of the Church, of humankind and of the whole creation.

Similarly, the theme of our sixteenth seminar was *Paving my Path for the World: The Choice of a Vocation*. The topics of vocation and modern life were discussed, along with choices of lifestyle, spirituality and purpose; values of capitalism and democracy and values of faith; justice and faith as a lifestyle; vocation defined as the place “where your deep gladness meets the world’s deepest need” (Frederick BUECHNER); community responsibility; personal callings and world needs; and free will and determinism in fulfilling our vocation.

In this book we broadened this range of issues with our now-constant focus on *Central European culture and identity*, where we deal with experiences of cooperation and conflict in Central Europe; visions concerning Central European identity in the European Union (EU); intellectual and spiritual exchange in the region; the role of minorities and nations; international dialogue; personalities and civil or church projects that transcend the borders of formal states; historical examples of Central European cultural cooperation and co-inspiration; and the particularity of Central Europe within European culture as a whole.

## II. Contributors

Sören ASMUS is a United Protestant from Germany. He graduated at the Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE) in Dublin and is an ordained minister in the Protestant Church of the Rhineland, now working as an assistant at the Kirchliche Hochschule Bethel (Barmen School of Theology) for the department of Ecumenism, Mission and the Science of Religion. He was on the WSCF European Regional Committee (ERC) and was a member of the Programmatic Working Group.

Patricia BLOCKSOME is a graduate student in theatre at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, USA. She is an ecumenically-minded evangelical Protestant. She is interested in the relationship of the performing arts with wider society, specifically in connection with issues of violence and war.

Rebecca BLOCKSOME recently completed a master’s degree in philosophy and theory of visual culture at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities in Koper, Slovenia. She previously lived and worked in Budapest, Hungary, as the coordinator of the World

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Pavel HANES has been a teacher at the Department of Evangelical Theology and Mission, Faculty of Education, University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, since 1993. Between 1982 and 1993 he was a Baptist pastor in Vavrišovo, a village under the High Tatras. The focus of his present PhD education and academic work is Christian philosophy, Marxism residuals in post-socialist countries and Old Testament subjects. His most important books are the *History of Christianity*, *Revivalism and Social Ethics*, *Interactive Introduction to Philosophy for Theologians*, *Biblical Greek* and *Biblical Hebrew*. He is active in preaching and teaching in the Baptist church in Banská Bystrica. Pavel and his wife Dana have two children, both studying theology and preparing themselves for church ministry.

John George HUBER is a retired pastor of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, who chaired the Faith, Order and Witness Committee of the Ecumenical Council of San Diego County and is a former board member of the North American Academy of Ecumenists.

Andrea JÁGEROVÁ (1973) graduated from the Department of Ethnology and Ethno-musicology of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia. Between 1993 and 1997, she was active as a soloist and dancer in SLUK (Slovak Folk Art Collective). Since 1997, she has worked as a cultural-educational staff member for Podpolianske Osvetové Stredisko (Education Centre of Podpol'anie) in Zvolen. Furthermore, she has been for many years engaged as a programme director and scenarist of folk festivals in Východná, Detva, Kokava nad Rimavicou and Košice. She leads the vocal group of the Folklore Corpus in Zvolen, and she collects folk music and dance material.

Holger LAHAYNE is originally from Germany, but he has been living in Lithuania for nearly sixteen years. Coming from an Evangelical-Lutheran background, he now belongs to the Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania. He is a well known Christian publicist and journalist in Lithuania.

Libor MAREK was born in 1980 in Ružomberok, Slovakia. He studied philosophy between 1998 and 2001 in the Roman Catholic Seminary in Bratislava, and then theology between 2001 and 2004

in the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He was ordained priest in 2005. He studied for his licence in Biblical exegesis between 2004 and 2008 in the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He has been an associate pastor since 2008 in the Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius Parish in Sterling Heights, Michigan, USA.

Jamie MORAN was born in the United States of America (USA), of Cherokee and Celtic descent, but he married and now works in England. At twenty-two, he converted from Tibetan Buddhism to Russian Orthodox Christianity; he works as a therapist and senior lecturer on counselling and psychology at a university in London. He is writing a novel on the conflict between settlers and indigenous peoples in the American West of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, and he is a sub-chief in the Cante Tinze (Brave Hearts) Warrior Society of the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) at Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

Dr NAGYPÁL Szabolcs (1974) is a graduate in ecumenical theology, law and literature; he also holds a PhD in theology. He is an assistant professor of philosophy of religion in ELTE University, Budapest, Hungary, and a researcher and theologian in the Benedictine *Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute* (BGÖI) in Pannonhalma. He was involved in the leadership of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) at various levels. He is the vice-president of the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF) and the moderator of its Theology Commission (ThC). He is the editor-in-chief of the Central European *Ecumenical Anthologies*, and was previously editor-in-chief of *Student World* (SW) and *Mozaik*.

Jozef PALAŠČÁK was born in Košice, Slovakia, in 1984. He studied Slovak language and literature, as well as aesthetics, at the Faculty of Arts in Prešov, Slovakia. He continues to study philology at the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice. He works as an editor for Radio Regina. He published a collection of poetry called TELOI, for which he received the Ivan Krasko award for the best poetry book debut in 2008. He is Greek Catholic. He likes books – both to read and to write – as well as art, dancing and mountaineering. For him, creating is a way to fulfil who he is, to use and show what God has given him and continues to give; it is a way to hear and follow God until some tracks of God's presence are evident in himself and in creation. His series on the *Song of Songs* is based on the photos of Katarína BARLOVÁ.

Daniel PASTIRČÁK (1959) is a poet, prose-writer and essayist. He graduated with a degree in Protestant theology in Bratislava, Slovakia. He works as a preacher of the Free Evangelical church

(*Bratská cirkev*). His book *Damian's River* (1993) was listed on the List of Honour of the International Board of Books for Youth. His other books are *Tehilim*, *Cintet* and *Christ in Brussels*. *Cintet* was honoured as the best Slovak book of the year for youth. He is also engaged in art and has exhibited in galleries in Slovakia and abroad.

Nerija PUTINAITE is a doctor of philosophy. She is thirty-eight years old, an associate professor in Vilnius Pedagogical University in Lithuania and Vice-Minister for Education and Science; her main interests are Immanuel KANT's practical philosophy, contemporary ethics, issues of identity of contemporary Lithuanian society.

Peter ŠAJDA was born in 1977 in Bratislava, Slovakia. He completed his studies in modern philology in 2001 and in Roman Catholic theology in 2007, and received a PhD in philosophy in 2007. He has participated in study programmes in Denmark (Ålborg and København) and Switzerland (Genève). He is Roman Catholic and a member of the Order of Preachers. He works at the Institute of Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He was a member of the European Regional Committee (ERC) of WSCF Europe, an editor of *Student World*, and the chairperson of WSCF CESR. He was also the editor-in-chief of *Mozaik*.

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Aaron C. STEVENS was born in the United States and is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), but is currently serving the Church of Scotland as the minister for the Saint Columba's congregation in Budapest. After visiting Hungary on a youth mission trip in 1991, he moved to Budapest in 1993, teaching English until he returned to the United States in 2000 to pursue theological study. He is married to Edit, and they have two children.

### III. Thanks

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The preparation of both of the aforementioned seminars was overseen by our coordinator SZÜCS Laura, whose excellent work and experience contributed greatly to the smooth course of the events. Together, these teams of members of our sister organisations worked to fundraise, organise, implement and follow up our joint activities. We are extremely grateful for all their efforts and vision.